| Diploma Programme course outline—TOK | | | | | |
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| School name | Hellgate High School | | | School code | 92269 |
| Time distribution |  |  |  |  |  |
| Starting date of TOK course in year 1  of the Diploma Programme | Fall 2012 | Ending date of TOK course in year 2  of the Diploma Programme | Spring 2013 |  |
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| Name of the teacher who completed this outline | Jenni L. Frizzell | | **Date of IB training** | July 2008 | |
| Date when outline was completed | October 2011 | | **Name of workshop**  (indicate name of subject and workshop category) | TOK Level 2 | |

**Focus and Description**

The official IB description for this course is: “This course examines the origins and validity of various ways of knowing. The content is the various subject areas of a student’s education as well as personal beliefs acquired in or out of school. The process of the course is to reflect critically upon what the student claims to know and what is professed as knowledge by others.”

Theory of Knowledge is a critical thinking course with a philosophical basis of critically interpreting how we obtain, share, and process through language, perception, reason and emotion, and apply those *ways* of knowing to the areas of knowledge: mathematics, arts, sciences (natural and human), history, ethics, and religion. Students are asked to examine *how* they know, not *what* they know. This is a course in metacognition, metaphysics, and epistemologies.

Through inquiry based learning, students discover critical thinking skills and also an appreciation for different lenses of looking at the ways of knowing and the areas of knowledge. They become lifelong critical thinkers and lifelong learners, capable of looking at questions, subjects, topics, and ideas from multiple angles. This course helps students discover their views on different knowledge issues and encourages them to share, listen, and learn among their classmates. Through the course of each semester, students’ thinking and understanding of knowledge are shaped.

**Aims**

According to the International Baccalaureate Organization, the aims of TOK are to engage students in reflection on, and questioning of, the bases of knowledge so that they will:

* Develop a habit of intellectual honesty and a concern for truthfulness, by learning to claim only that which is warranted given what they know (intellectual rigor);
* Become aware of the interpretive nature of human knowledge (including personal and ideological biases);
* Understand human knowledge as a social construct;
* Consider that knowing may place obligations or responsibilities on the knower;
* Develop an understanding of why critically examining knowledge is important;
* Understand why critically examining knowledge claims is important;
* Make interdisciplinary connections;
* Understand the strengths and limitations of individual, ideological, and cultural perspectives.

**Objectives**

Through taking this Theory of Knowledge course, students will be able to:

1. Analyse critically knowledge claims, their underlying assumptions and their implications.
2. Generate questions, explanations, conjectures, hypotheses, alternative ideas and possible solutions in response to knowledge issues concerning areas of knowledge, ways of knowing, and students’’ own experience as learners.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives on knowledge issues
4. Draw links and make effective comparisons between different approaches to knowledge issues that derive from areas of knowledge, ways of knowing, theoretical positions and cultural values.
5. Demonstrate an ability to give a personal, self-aware response to a knowledge issue
6. Formulate and communicate ideas clearly in formal/informal writing and in presentation with regard for accuracy and academic honesty

Resources:

Dombrowski, Eileen. IB Theory of Knowledge Course Companion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print.

Van De Lagemaat, Richard. *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*. 2nd. Cabridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

\*Additional supplementary fiction and nonfiction texts, prose/poetry, essays, articles, film clips, discussion topics, and journal prompts.

|  | Topic/unit  (as identified in the IB guide)  State the topics/units in the order you are planning to teach them. | Contents | Allocated time | | | Assessment instruments to be used | Resources  List the main resources to be used, including information technology if applicable. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| One class is |  | minutes. |
| 50 |
| In one week there are |  | classes. |
| 5 |
|  |  |  |
| Semester 1 | **Introduction to TOK**  During the introduction to the course, students examine different representations of knowledge, how it is gained, lost, passed on, or changed. Students begin to formulate their own definitions of knowledge issues, metacognition, metaphysics, and epistemologies. | 🡪Why is it important to examine how we know things?  🡪What major things contribute to knowledge?  🡪How do we utilize knowledge?  🡪How does knowledge change or remain the same? | 1 Week | | | **Each Semester:**  -TOK Journal 40%  -Class Participation 15%  -Papers 15%  -Presentations: 15%  -Additional Assignments: 15%  \*Papers and presentations scored using the 4 assessment criteria set forth in the IBO ToK guide.  \*Journal prompts taken from knowledge issues and linking questions, as well as materials from other IB courses. | **ALL UNITS**  Dombrowski, Eileen. IB Theory of Knowledge Course Companion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print.  Van De Lagemaat, Richard. *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*. 2nd. Cabridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.  \*Additional supplementary fiction and nonfiction texts, prose/poetry, essays, articles, film clips, discussion topics, and journal prompts. Also, materials from courses in the IB diploma program will be utilized at appropriate intervals. |
| **Knowers and the Nature of Knowledge**  This unit flows from the introduction fluidly as students begin to examine their own roles as ‘knowers’ in the different ways and areas of knowledge. This part of the course asks the students to self-reflect on how they personally relate to knowledge and how they perceive other ‘knowers’ relating to the same kinds of knowledge. Finally, students will look at collective knowledge and how it serves a function in the areas/ways of knowing. | 🡪How is knowledge gained?  🡪What are the sources of knowledge?  🡪Do we construct reality of do we recognize it?  🡪What role does personal experience play in the formulation of knowledge claims?  🡪What are the differences between information, data, belief, faith, opinion, knowledge and wisdom?  🡪How does knowledge change? What influences change in knowledge?  🡪Is their one source of knowledge more reliable than others? | 2 Weeks | | |
| **Epistemology and Metaphysics**  In order to make the rest of the course more manageable, time in this unit is spent discussing the epistemologies in broad terms (ways of knowing and areas of knowing) creating their own definitions. Of course, these definitions will most likely change or shift as knowledge issues are addressed. To guide the course, students will create their own knowledge issues and respond to journal prompts in regard to broad knowledge issues in each epistemological area. The shift from thinking about each area or way of knowing as a “field” or “subject” separate from others to thinking about them as overlapping and co-dependent ways in which we know is essential. | 🡪How do we define the epistemologies?  🡪Are there places where the epistemologies overlap? Are there clear boarders between some?  🡪How does belief and truth fit into the different epistemologies?  🡪How does the knower relate to the epistemologies at different points in his/her process of knowing?  🡪Is expertise or experience more concrete when knowing in one or more epistemologies? | 2 Weeks | | |
| **Way: Sensory Perception**  This is an important source of knowledge. Sense organs provide a channel of communication between us and the world—without them we would be insulated from the possibility of physical experience. But the way we perceive the world depends crucially on the nature of these sense organs. | 🡪How does perception affect knowledge?  🡪Are things just as they appear?  🡪What is the relationship between experience and perception?  🡪What constitutes “good evidence”? | 2 Weeks | | |
|  | **Way: Language**  Language has an important effect on the way we experience the world. Most of our knowledge comes to us linguistically encoded. This immediately raises questions of the relationship between language and the world. Language is interesting in that it’s role is seen in aesthetics (poetry, literature, etc) and in communication with other humans, directly or indirectly. This way of knowing is broad and its implications to the knower are very important. | 🡪Does language create order? Or does it reflect order in the world?  🡪What is the role of language in knowledge?  🡪Is there knowledge that transcends language?  🡪Does language reflect different ways of knowing in different time periods or cultures?  🡪Without language, what knowledge would be left out?  🡪How does language relate to the other ways of knowing? | 3 Weeks | | |  |  |
|  | **Way: Emotion**  For centuries there has existed an idea in some academic and scientific circles that emotion is the antithesis reasons—that they oppose each other. More recently, awareness has grown in these same circles that the knowing we gain through what we call “emotion” may often may often complement what we learn through reason. Beyond this, there may exist truths which are really only accessible through those experiences—intuition, revelation—that can be categorized as part of our emotions. | 🡪Is there any kind of knowledge which can be attained solely through emotion?  🡪Is emotion an essential ingredient of scientific or artistic knowledge?  🡪Can there be creativity without emotion?  🡪Are facts ever based in emotional knowledge?  🡪Does sensory perception or language influence how we know things emotionally? How about the other way around? | 2 Weeks | | |  |  |
|  | **Way: Logic/Reason**  We use basic laws of logic in the attempt to achieve consistency in our thought. We also assume the truth of other principles—for example, that every event has a cause, or that nature is uniform. But can these laws also mislead us? Logic and reason are often misconstrued as fact—more concrete than the other ways of knowing, but students will examine if that is, indeed, substantial or not. | 🡪In what way, if any, can these laws be justified?  🡪Does knowledge require “good reasons” be provided?  🡪What is a “logical” argument?  🡪What are common logical fallacies?  🡪What are the differences between inductive and deductive reason? | 3 Weeks | | |  |  |
|  | **Ways of Knowing Application**  During one of these weeks, students will use the work they’ve done over the semester to come back to questions of truth, wisdom, belief, faith, and knowledge. They will be asked to examine knowledge issues on their own and draw conclusions/ask questions from what they have gleaned. For their semester final, students will be presenting on a topic provided from a list of choices and how it relates to the ways of knowing. The presentation will include a longer paper, both scored according to the IB Rubrics for both presentations and papers. | 🡪Truth and Wisdom,  🡪Truth/Belief  🡪Knower’s relationship to knowledge, truth, belief, wisdom.  🡪End of semester Exam and presentations,  🡪Final papers, presentations, and journals due. | 3 Weeks | | |  |  |
| Semester 2 | **Area: Mathematics**  Mathematics gives us certainty, but does it tell us anything about the world? The most successful areas of knowledge, in terms of their predictive power, are those that are amenable to mathematical analysis: and it has been suggested that the laws of nature are written into the language of mathematics. | 🡪What exactly is the relationship between mathematics and the world?  🡪Is mathematics a language?  🡪Is math discovered or invented?  🡪What is the relationship between math and science?  🡪What is an “elegant” proof?  🡪What is a mathematical truth? | 3 weeks | | | **Each Semester:**  -TOK Journal 40%  -Class Participation 15%  -Papers 15%  -Presentations: 15%  -Additional Assignments: 15%  \*Papers and presentations scored using the 4 assessment criteria set forth in the IBO ToK guide.  \*Journal prompts taken from knowledge issues and linking questions, as well as materials from other IB courses. | Dombrowski, Eileen. IB Theory of Knowledge Course Companion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print.  Van De Lagemaat, Richard. *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*. 2nd. Cabridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.  \*Additional supplementary fiction and nonfiction texts, prose/poetry, essays, articles, film clips, discussion topics, and journal prompts. Also, materials from courses in the IB diploma program will be utilized at appropriate intervals. |
| **Area: Aesthetics**  A good opening question in the field of Aesthetics is: What distinguishes art from non-art? Among the traditional criteria that have been suggested are: the intentions of the creator, the intrinsic properties of the object itself, and the response of the spectators. Another issue concerns value judgments. | 🡪Is beauty really in the eye of the beholder?  🡪Are all interpretations of equal worth, or are some critics better qualified than others?  🡪Does art have a function?  🡪Does it communicate where words fail?  🡪Does emotional value or connection to a piece change aesthetic value?  🡪how do the other areas of knowledge overlap or influence Aesthetics? | 3 Weeks | | |
| **Area: Sciences—Natural and Social**  **Natural Sciences--**—Scientific knowledge and progress is measurable in the way that it has provided success in many areas; for example, through science, we have been able to make washing clothes easier, travel in outer space, make medicines, or diagnose maladies. Such success may be thought to result from the use of a specific methodology based on observation and repeatable experiments.  **Social Sciences—**Some thinkers have argued that, since human beings are conscious and their actions are purposeful, our explanations of human behaviour will always be different in kind from those offered by the natural sciences. | 🡪Is scientific discovery entirely logical, or does the process include irrational elements?  🡪Why is science regarded as the paradigm of all knowledge?  🡪Is there a scientific method?  🡪Does this scientific method result in knowledge?  🡪What is the history of science?  🡪How does science relate to religion and philosophy?  🡪What is a paradigm shift?  🡪What are the inherent problems of knowledge in the social sciences?  🡪How do methods vary between natural and social sciences?  🡪Are there universal constants or “laws” of human behaviour? | 4 Weeks | | |
| **Area: Religion**  A trait among cultures all over the world and throughout history is the use of religion to make sense of the word; to make meaning and find purpose in our lives; to answer the questions like “why do innocent people suffer” and “what happens when we die?” Religion is one cultural aspect studied by anthropologists as a window into a culture’s norms, morals, and ideas. Discussing religion and its relationship to knowledge can be tricky, as looking at one’s convictions in an objective light often is. However, this unit will focus on how human reason can penetrate the mysteries of religion, and ask how our own beliefs relate to those of people from different cultures. | 🡪Is religion a universally understood concept?  🡪Are the different religions of the world more similar to one another or more different.  🡪Do all sects deserve reverence and respect?  🡪How does a culture’s religion influence its history, ethics, arts, and sciences?  🡪What purposes does religion serve?  🡪Where do knowledge and faith overlap? Where do they part ways?  🡪How does knowledge through or about religion promote global citizenship? | 3 Weeks | | |
| **Area: Ethics**  Historically, ethics have governed proper and improper action and decision making. Ethical value has been placed on ideas, actions, people, events, and schools of thought. Ethics come from so many different places—from experience of the knower, history, religion, family ideals and values, community, society, and individual belief of ethical values. For some, acting ethically is a duty, for others a something they constantly fight against or try to change. For this course, the knowledge issues in Ethics specifically engage the knower in examining ethics and the origin of different ethical thought, as well as the relationship ethics place in the midst of the other areas of knowing. | 🡪What is the difference between a fact and a value?  🡪How objective is science and how subjective is morality?  🡪Do we have specific moral intuitions that can give us knowledge?  🡪Is there a single end, such as happiness, at which all our activities aim, or can we ascribe an independent value to other goals such as truth or friendship?  🡪 What is the relationship between morality and behaviour?  🡪Are people capable of altruism, or are we in some meaningful sense, always selfish? | 3 Weeks | | |
|  | **Area: History**  Many of our judgments are implicitly historical in nature. The only way that we can understand the present is by relating to the past. This provides a justification for why we study history, but one must wonder if history can truly be objective. Some have claimed to discern laws or patterns of history that determine what appears to us as the flux of events, and they have thus considered history to be a science. Others have seen history as an essentially random process influenced by chance or the unpredictable actions of people. | 🡪How does the ways in which history is recorded influence our understanding of it?  🡪Do the influences of science and/or religion influence historical significance of events?  🡪How is historical significance gauged?  🡪What is determined as knowledge gained from history?  🡪Is the maxim true that “History will repeat itself”? | 3 Weeks | | |  |  |
|  | **TOK Paper and Presentations**  Final paper for the course and presentations—internal and external assessment. |  | 2 Weeks | | |  |  |

1. Links with Diploma Programme teachers

As the TOK guide indicates, it is an IB requirement that all Diploma Programme teachers are familiar with TOK as they have to make connections with TOK questions in their own courses. They can also suggest some theoretical concerns that could be taken further in the TOK classroom. Within this context, how do you plan to work with your colleagues to ensure that TOK becomes a real link among all of them?

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| For each area of knowledge, I plan to meet with the departments representative, both IB teachers and non-IB teachers. I will provide an outline of my course and essential questions we will address in ToK that relate to each area and meet periodically as the year progresses. I will encourage teachers to send assignments or readings with students to their ToK class, and I will also maintain constant communication with other IB teachers as to where we are in the course, so that if they have anything to add or any concerns they are addressed in an open way. |

1. TOK assessment components

Briefly explain how and when you will work on them. Include the date when you will first introduce the assessment components to your students. Explain the different stages, the timeline and how students will be prepared to undertake both.

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| The TOK journal will be introduced immediately into the course, as will the assessment tool of class participation and the expectations for quality of work. Presentations and smaller papers will begin once the unit covering epistemologies and metaphysics is finished. Presentations and smaller papers will be scored using the ToK criteria so that these items become common language. At each semester’s end, the longer paper and formal presentation will be used as internal assessment. |

1. International mindedness

Every IB course should contribute to the development of international mindedness in students. As an example of how you would do this, choose one topic from your outline that would allow your students to analyse it from different cultural perspectives. Briefly explain the reason for your choice and what resources you will use to achieve this goal.

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| Topic | Contribution to the development of international mindedness (including resources you will use) |
| Religion | Because religion is something that spans both history and is seen throughout cultures, and is used by anthropologists to study a culture’s norms, values, ideas, and beliefs, I think that it is one of the most powerful ways to connect students to international mindedness. Some of the most powerful resources will be modern world issues and the questions that come from those issues. Further, examining the relationship between religion and history provides something of a map of how cultures have changed and shifted. At Hellgate, many students participate in a block class of history and literature, and there is a strong emphasis in using world religions to understand boundaries, conflict, and history. With this background, students will be prepared to address religion as a way of understanding multiculturalism and the knowledge issues that are developed worldwide in relationship to religion. |

1. Development of the IB learner profile

Through the course it is also expected that students will develop the attributes of the IB learner profile. As an example of how you would do this, choose one topic from your course outline and explain how the contents and related skills would pursue the development of any attribute(s) of the IB learner profile that you will identify.

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| Topic | Contribution to the development of the attribute(s) of the IB learner profile |
| Ethics | **Thinkers** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.  Examining ethics asks students to think not only about a perspective that is universal, but also one that can be deeply personal. Addressing these areas and how they overlap will ask that students be critical thinkers. **Open-minded** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.  Being asked to understand and comprehend different ethical backgrounds for other cultures and fellow humans, including peers, will ask that the Theory of Knowledge learner be open minded.   **Reflective**  They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.  In this unit in particular students will be asked to reflect upon their own ethics, and also to understand the ethical backgrounds of others, whether they be on another continent or across the room from them. |